

Physical Activity



New Guidelines

The 1996 Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health cites physical inactivity as a serious nationwide problem. The report also demonstrates that moderate physical activity — using about 150 calories per day or 1,000 calories per week — can be beneficial.

Moderate Activity Examples

- Walking a 20-minute mile
- Playing basketball 15-20 minutes
- Shoveling snow 15 minutes
- Stairwalking 15 minutes
- Swimming laps 20 minutes
- Bicycling 5 miles in 30 minutes
- Raking leaves 30 minutes
- Gardening 30-45 minutes
- Washing windows or floors 45-60 minutes
- Washing and waxing a car for 45-60 minutes

Activity Benefits

- Reduces risk of dying prematurely from cardiovascular disease
- Reduces risk of developing diabetes
- Reduces risk of developing colon cancer
- Helps control weight
- Helps prevent or delay development of hypertension
- Reduces blood pressure in persons who already have hypertension
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Promotes psychological well-being
- Improves physical function in those with poor health

More benefits can be gained by increasing activity intensity or duration.



Problem:

Lack of exercise and poor diet are the second leading causes of actual death in the U.S.

Physical inactivity is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and colon cancer.

60%

of Americans do not exercise regularly.

5%

of Americans are not active at all.

57%

of Idahoans do not exercise regularly.

22%

of Idahoans are not active at all.

25%

of Idahoans are physically active for 30 minutes or more for 5 or more times per week.

Recommendations for Health Care Providers

- Ask patients if they engage in any regular physical activity.
- Discuss realistic goals for weight loss, and mention benefits of looking and feeling better.
- Note that physical activity need not be strenuous to achieve health benefits.
- Suggest undertaking at least moderate physical activity, progressing to 30 minutes or more on most days.
- Mention that exercise should be fun or it will not be regular.
- List a variety of activity choices: walking, bicycling, gardening, household chores, dancing, tai chi, aerobics, weight training, swimming and cross country skiing. Invite patients to include their favorites.
- Recommend trade-offs such as taking stairs instead of elevators, parking a block or two from work or shopping, and walking the dog instead of watching television.
- Emphasize that the most important component of regular exercise is the *regular*, not the *exercise*.

Solution:

- At least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most, if not all days of the week are recommended for persons two years old and older.
- Activity can occur continuously or in 8 to 10 minute periods.
- People should choose activities they enjoy and that will fit into their daily lives.

Sources:

1997 Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Survey;
1996 Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health;
1996 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force,
Guide to Clinical Preventive Services

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